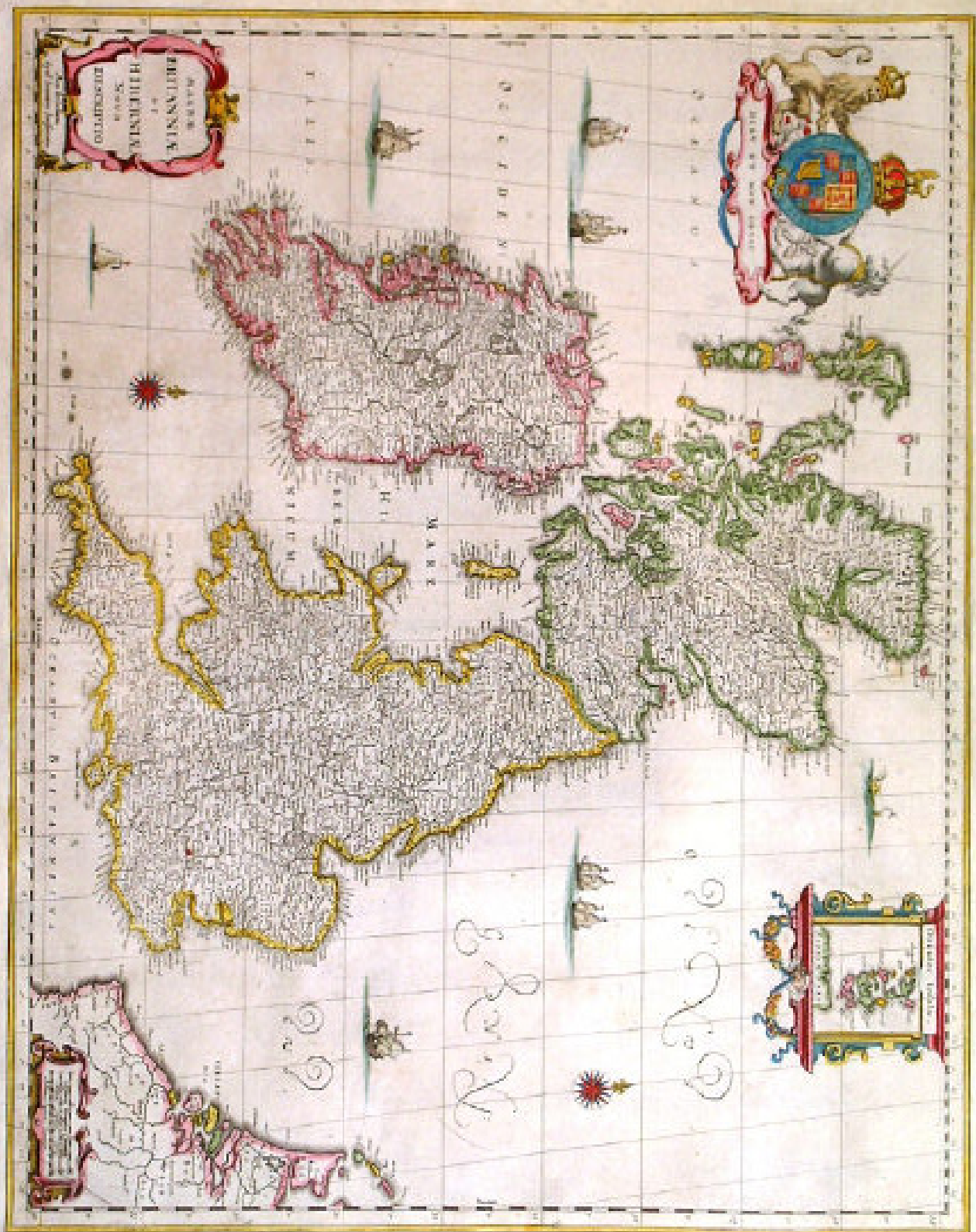


# Chapter 1



# Insular Art





# Insular Art

## Chapter 1

Insular art is the style of art produced in the post-Roman history of the British Isles. The term derives from *insula*, the Latin term for “island”; in this period Britain and Ireland shared a largely common style different from that of the rest of Europe. Arts historians usually group insular art as part of the Migration Period art movement as well as Early Medieval Western art, and it is the combination of these two traditions that give the style its special character.

Most insular art originates from the Irish monasticism of Celtic Christianity and the period begins around 600 AD with the combining of ‘Celtic’ styles and Anglo-Saxon (English) styles. The influence of Insular art affected all subsequent European medieval art, especially in the decorative elements of Romanesque and Gothic manuscripts.

Surviving examples of Insular art are mainly illuminated manuscripts, metalwork and carvings in stone, especially stone crosses. Surfaces are highly decorated with intricate patterning, with no attempt to give an impression of depth, volume or recession. The best examples include the Book of Kells, Lindisfarne Gospels, and the Book of Durrow.

### Insular decoration

The Insular style is most famous for its highly dense, intricate and imaginative decoration, which takes elements from several earlier styles. From late Celtic art come the love of spirals, triskeles, circles and other geometric motifs. These were combined with animal forms probably mainly deriving from the Germanic version of the general Eurasian animal style, though also from Celtic art, where heads terminating scrolls were common. There is no attempt to represent depth in manuscript painting, with all the emphasis on a brilliantly patterned surface. In early works the human figure was shown in the same geometric fashion as animal figures, but reflections of a classical figure style spread as the period went on.

### Background

The Insular style arises from the meeting of their two styles, Celtic and Germanic Animal style, in a Christian context, and with some awareness of Late Antique style, especially in their application to the book, which was a new type of object for both traditions, as well as to metalwork.

Although many more examples survive than of large pieces of metalwork, the development of the style is usually described in terms of the same outstanding examples:

**Durham Gospel Book Fragment.** The earliest painted Insular manuscript to survive, produced in Lindisfarne c. 650, but with only seven leaves of the book remaining, not all with illuminations. This introduces interlace, and also uses Celtic motifs drawn from metalwork. The design of two of the surviving pages relates them as a two-page spread.

**Book of Durrow.** The earliest surviving Gospel Book with a full programme of decoration (though not all has survived): six extant carpet pages, a full page miniature of the four evangelist’s symbols, four full page miniatures of the evangelists’ symbols, four pages with very large initials, and decorated text on other pages. Many minor initial groups are decorated. Its date and place of origin remain subjects of debate, with 650-690 and Durrow in Ireland, Iona or Lindisfarne being the normal contenders. The influences on the decoration are also highly controversial, especially regarding Coptic or other

Near Eastern influence.

After large initials the following letters on the same line, or for some lines beyond, continue to be decorated at a smaller size. Dots round the outside of large initials are much used. The figures are highly stylised, and some pages use Germanic interlaced animal ornament, whilst others use the full repertoire of Celtic geometric spirals. Each page uses a different and coherent set of decorative motifs. Only four colours are used, but the viewer is hardly conscious of any limitation from this. All the elements of Insular manuscript style are already in place. The execution, though of high quality, is not as refined as in the best later books, nor is the scale of detail as small.

**Lindisfarne Gospels** Produced in Lindisfarne by Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, between about 690 and his death in 721 (perhaps towards the end of this period), this is a Gospel Book in the style of the Book of Durrow, but more elaborate and complex. All the letters on the pages beginning the Gospels are highly decorated in a single composition, and many two-page openings are designed as a unit, with carpet pages facing an incipit (“Here begins..”) initial page at the start of each Gospel. Eadfrith was almost certainly the scribe as well as the artist. There are four Evangelist portraits, clearly derived from the classical tradition but treated without any sense of depth; the borders around them are far plainer than the decoration of the text pages, and there is clearly a sense of two styles which Eadfrith does not attempt to integrate wholly. The carpet-pages are enormously complex, and superbly executed.

**Book of Kells** Usually dated to around 800, although sometimes up to a century earlier, the place of origin is disputed between Iona and Kells, or other locations. It is also often thought to have been begun in Iona and then continued in Ireland, after disruption from Viking raids; the book survives nearly intact but the decoration is not finished, with some parts in outline only. It is far more comprehensively decorated than any previous manuscript in any tradition, with every page (except two) having many small decorated letters. Although there is only one carpet page, the incipit initials are so densely decorated, with only a few letters on the page, that they rather take over this function. Human figures are more numerous than before, though treated in a thoroughly stylized fashion, and closely surrounded, even hemmed in, by decoration as crowded as on the initial pages. A few scenes such as the Temptation and Arrest of Christ are included, as well as a Madonna and Child, surrounded by angels (the earliest Madonna in a Western book). More miniatures may have been planned or executed and lost. Colors are very bright and the decoration has tremendous energy, with spiral forms predominating. Gold and silver are not used.

The true legacy of insular art lies not so much in the specific stylistic features mentioned in the last section, but in a fundamental departure from the classical approach to decoration, whether of books or other works of art. The barely controllable energy of Insular decoration, spiraling across formal partitions, becomes a feature of later medieval art, especially Gothic art, in areas where specific Insular motifs are hardly used, such as architecture. The mixing of the figurative with the ornamental also remained characteristic of all later medieval illumination; indeed for the complexity and density of the mixture, insular manuscripts are only rivaled by some 15th century works from the final flowering of Flemish illumination. It is also noticeable that these characteristics are always rather more pronounced in the North of Europe than the South; Italian art, even in the Gothic period, always retains a certain classical clarity in forms.



# Insular Art

## Knots

- Celtic knots are a variety of (mostly endless) knots and stylized graphical representations of knots used for decoration, adopted by the ancient Celts.
- Celtic knots were created in pre-Christian times
- The knots are most known for their use in the ornamentation of Christian monuments and manuscripts like the 8th century Book of Kells.
- **History**
  - o Not much history of the knots is available before the beginning of the Christian influence on the Celts in about A.D. 450.
  - o There is much evidence for the use of geometric patterns as ornamentation particularly in jewelry before that time.
  - o Some historians have theorized that early Celtic religion prevented their depicting creatures realistically.
    - Similar to the Islamic prohibition, which gave rise to the development of Islamic calligraphy.
  - o The same pre-Christian designs found their way into early Christian manuscripts and art work with the addition of depictions from life, such as animals, plants and even humans.
  - o The broken and reconnected plaitwork that is characteristic of true knotwork began in Northern Italy and Southern Gaul and spread to Ireland by the 7th century.
    - Examples of plaitwork (a woven, unbroken cord design) predate knotwork designs in several cultures around the world
  - o Similar designs exist in Norse culture, and as far as China.
  - o In modern times Celtic Art is popularly thought of in terms of national identity and therefore specifically Irish, Scottish or Welsh.

## Significance

- J. Romilly Allen has identified “eight elementary knots which form the basis of nearly all the interlaced patterns in Celtic decorative art. There is no evidence to indicate that a knot had any specific philosophical or religious significance beyond perhaps the most obvious, that being the intricacy capable in the work of humans, itself reflective of the intricacy of natural forms. The Celts themselves left very little in the way of records, and most symbols are interpreted by archaeologists and other scholars who study the symbols in context. Some ancient Celtic symbols have changed in meaning over time, having been influenced by the introduction of Christianity and the influence of other cultures. Some Wiccans have taken up the creation of celtic knots, attributing to them ideas and magical properties that may not have been there originally. While it is unknown whether the ancient Celts attributed any meaning to their designs, there is nothing that prevents the modern viewer from assigning significance. While there are many Celtic symbol guides available, especially those that list every variation of celtic knot, many of the purported meanings of the symbols are usually simply made up (most often to sell trinkets and jewelry). There are no known authentic knotwork designs meaning love or loyalty or many of the other common meanings ascribed to the designs. While many of the ancient designs certainly had some spiritually significant meaning, these have been lost to the ages. The continual looping of the designs suggests themes of eternity and interconnectedness.

## Animals

- Interlaced animals and men usually represent relationships, or emphasize the interdependence of mankind and nature.
- Animals, both real and fantastic, occupied an important place in medieval art and thought.
  - Artists readily employed animal motifs, along with foliate designs, as part of their decorative vocabulary. Early medieval jewelry, for instance, abounds with animal forms elongated and twisted into intricate patterns.
  - Deluxe Bibles and gospel books often make use of animal designs to enliven the sacred text.
  - Animal forms might be employed to imbue utilitarian objects with majesty or even humor.
- Animals carried a rich variety of symbolic associations often drawn from the past.
  - The lamb served as an important sacrificial animal in ancient Near Eastern religious rites, including those of the Israelites.
  - Christians adopted the lamb as a symbol of Christ, emphasizing his sacrifice for humanity .
  - The griffin, regarded in antiquity as an attendant of Apollo and a keeper of light, retained its role as a guardian figure for the dead even in later Christian contexts.
  - Christians looked to the Bible for much of their animal symbolism.
    - John the Baptist's description of the Holy Spirit as "like a dove from heaven" (John 1:32) offered a ready image.
    - Doves crafted out of precious materials could be found suspended above the altar in both Byzantine and Western churches.
    - By the fifth century, the four winged beasts described in Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation were firmly associated with the four writers of the Gospels.
  - In calendars, animals, as zodiacal symbols and as participants in seasonal activities, provided a visual shorthand for the months of the year.

## The Bestiary

- Animals also served as vehicles for religious allegory and moral instruction.
  - The Bestiary was a collection of descriptions and interpretations of animals, intended as both a natural history and a series of moral and religious lessons.
  - It was widely read in the Middle Ages and served as a source for artistic invention.
  - In addition to providing intriguing interpretations of animals, bestiaries offered tales about the existence of bizarre and loathsome creatures, many of which appeared in medieval art.
  - The basilisk, which was equated with the devil, could kill by its very smell, by a glance, or even by the sound of its hissing.
  - The mantichore, with the face of a man, the body of a lion, and the tail of a scorpion, possessed a seductive voice likened to the sound of a fine flute.
    - It represented the siren song of temptation that surrounded the Christian soul on its perilous journey through an earthly existence.
- Among the most familiar sights in Irish art are the Celtic animal symbols
    - The people of ancient Ireland used Celtic animal symbolism to attempt to understand the otherwise incomprehensible natural cycles of the Earth.
    - Celts revered Nature itself, be it in the form of plants, animals, or elements.
    - They believed the animals were there to teach them how to live in harmony with Nature.

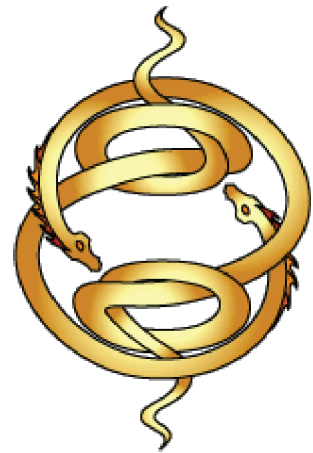


- o Elite Irish families used animal symbolism on their Coats of Arms.
- o The early Celts believed the animals arose from the fantastic Otherworld whence come the elves and fairies.
- Celtic animal symbolism arises from an abundant body of lore, tale, and song and draw upon a mythology as old as that of Greece or Rome.
  - o Celtic animals symbols are not insignificant slices of distant history, but a living link extending from the ancient Celts to the Irish people of today.
  - o *When one admires Celtic animal symbols, one must remember that they are exactly what they say they are: symbols. They are not inserted for mere adornment; they are there to represent those aspects of each animal that the Celts honored.*
  - o *To understand Celtic animal symbolism is to understand the art and what the artist was attempting to bring across in his work.*
- In the greatest example of medieval illuminated manuscripts, the Book of Kells, the four Evangelists were frequently depicted as Celtic animal symbols:
  - o Matthew the man, Mark the lion, Luke the calf, and John as the eagle.

## Land Animal Symbols

### Snakes and Serpents

- o The snake was a complex Celtic animal symbol calling forth many ideas to the Celts.
- o Representing the process of creation, rebirth, fertility, and healing.
- o Serpents also represented the connection between the rivers and seas as well as the Heavens and Earth.
- o The snake both protected the entrance to the Otherworld and acted as the gods' companion.
- o Thanks to the annual shedding of its skin, the snake was the Celtic animal symbolizing the cyclical nature of life.



### Dragon

- o The dragon is another mighty magical animal that appears in British and Welsh stories.
- o It is, of course, a creature of fire but is also related to the Power of the Land.
- o Serpents and dragons symbolize trouble. Whenever they appear, strife and infertility follow.
- o Dragons should be particularly troubling to a king, because the king is the symbol of the fertility of the tribe and its land and the dragons are the counter symbol, laying waste to the land and preventing new growth.

dragons are the counter symbol, laying waste to the land and preventing new growth.

## Horses

- o Horses are the most common animal symbols used by Celtic noblemen in battle.
- o These companions of the gods were known for their beauty, speed, vitality, and fertility.
- o Horses were Celtic animals symbolizing development, healing, rejuvenation, and life in motion
- o Horses were linked to the night, mystery, and magic.
  - Indeed, the term nightmare is taken from the word “mare”, meaning female horse. The Celts believed that nightmares were brought to the dreamer by a visiting horse
- o Horses were adored by the Celts for their intimate relationship with the land.



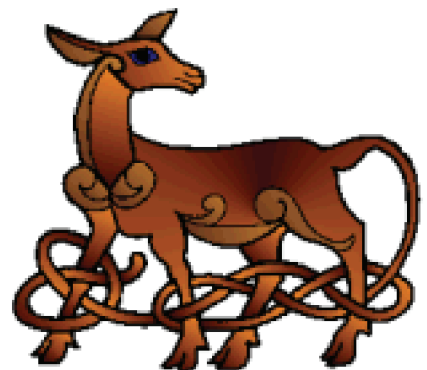
## Boar/Pig

- o The boar is a symbol of masculine power. The meat of the boar was served at Otherworld feasts for the deities.
- o Boars, in addition to representing fertility and wealth, boars symbolize courage and strong warriors for they are strong, dangerous, and very hard to kill.
- o Their appearance in dreams and visions also indicates warriors.
- o The pig is the archetypal symbol of plenty, healing, and shape shifting.



## Deer

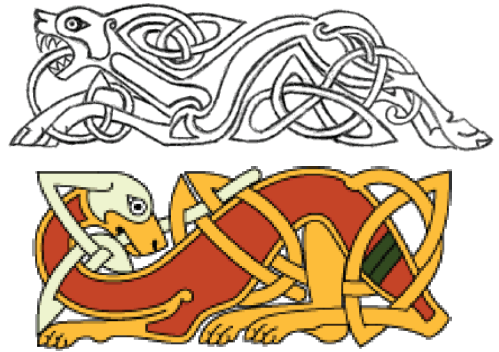
- o The deer was the oldest creature in existence according to the Celts.
- o The stag was particularly associated with nature and hunting.
- o This Celtic animal symbol was used to represent fertility, abundance, and renewal.
- o The antlers were often associated with trees and the sowing and harvesting of grain.
- o The deer was the principal animal hunted by the Celts for food.
- o White stags were considered to be from the Otherworld and, in myth, their appearance always heralded some profound change in the lives of those in the story.





## Hounds/Dogs/Wolf

- o Hounds were sacred to the faeries of Ireland and Scotland and thus were held in very high regard in both Celtic lands.
- o These faithful protectors were the Celtic animal symbols of loyalty, devotion, and unwavering faith and love.
- The wolf symbolized even more...representing learning and deep intuition.



## Cat

- o Unlike many other Indo-European cultures, the Celts did not revere cats, though there are many references to them in Celtic mythology.
- o Archtypally they serve the same guardian function as demons/angels in the Judeo-Christian myths.
- o Cats represent the mystery of the natural world.

## Fox

- o The Celts believed the fox to be a guide, and was honored for its wisdom. The Celts understood the fox knows the woods intimately, and they would rely upon the fox as their guide in the spirit world.



## Bull

- o Mostly, the Celtic bull symbolizes of strong will, uncompromising, and even belligerent the bull stands for unbending, stubborn personality. Another representation of the bull is that of riches and wealth. Likely due to the fact that this creature was a great source of food the Celts, it can easily be associated with easier, fairer, and abundant times in the Celtic villages.

## Air and Sea Animal Symbols

### Birds

- o Birds are one of the most complex groups of the Celtic animal symbols.
- o With the wide variety of birds that can be seen, the meaning is often wrapped up in the particular type of bird.
- o To understand the birds as Celtic animal symbols, one must



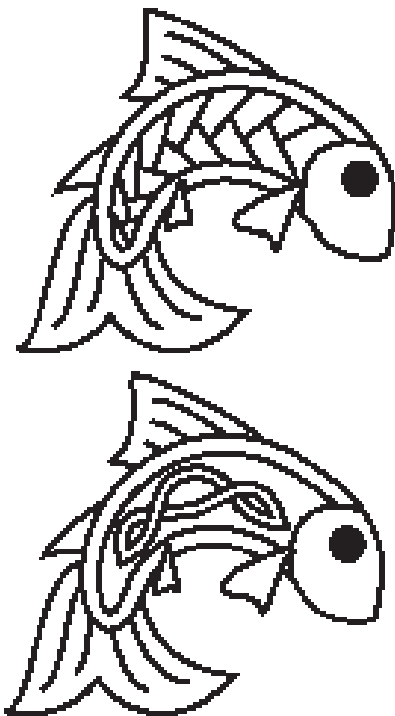
understand the characteristics of each particular bird.

- o Birds are usually used to represent prophetic knowledge, bloodshed, and skill.
- o In an omen, birds can be either the message or the messenger.
- o Birds, especially ravens and crows, usually presage bloodshed and battle, when they are associated with it, sticking with the theme of prophesy.

- o **Crows:** The crow was associated with death.
- o **Eagles:** The fearsome, glowering eagle was associated with both nobility and death.
- o **Peacocks:** The peacock was a symbol of purity.
- o **Cranes:** Thanks to several myths of heroic figures or deities being turned into cranes, these birds came to represent an apparent, but not real change and are often called for as signs of punishment for deception.
- o **Hérons:** The heron, because it mated for life, was often used on Celtic wedding bands.
- o **Ouzels (Blackbird):** The ouzel was known for being a small but tenacious protector of itself and its flock.

**Salmon:** The salmon was the symbol of all knowledge.

- o These creatures that swam the rivers and oceans were also linked to sacred ancient mysteries and deep emotion.
- Fish, salmon in particular, are associated with knowledge.
- o Their wisdom can also be passed on by eating.


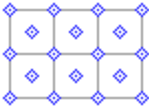




# Basic Interlacing





The most basic rule of interlacing is: “First under then over then under then...”




Some early documented construction techniques involved drawing lines, then creating ribbon-like bands around these lines, and then erasing the interlaced areas. Later construction techniques involve generating a grid of cells using points laid out like “dice 5”, and only drawing the lines needed, with little or no erasing required. From evidence on the manuscripts themselves this appears similar to the actual techniques used by the Celtic scribes.

	One “cell”.
	These cells are repeated and grouped to give a “grid” (in this case of 3 cells by 2 cells) of dots, circles, or diamonds. That is, the dots, small circles or diamond shapes are drawn to give guidelines for the knotwork bands.

Bands are drawn at 45° to the original grid, between but not touching the dots. If bubbles (small circles) or diamonds are used, then the edges touch the circles/diamonds. The bands “bounce” or “turn” off the edges and corners of the grid (referred to as the “walls” in this class). Please see the example below:




## Basic Interlace Example

	1. Build grid (example uses 3 cells by 4 cells and uses diamond shapes to mark the centers of the grid points).
	2. Draw 2 parallel lines starting at the edges of the circles, diamonds (or just off the dots), not the centers. Think of bands of ribbon placed between pegs.
	3. Now draw the perpendicular bands on either end...
	4. ...and bands running “under” the middle of the original band...

	5. ...then continue with all bands until you run into a “wall” or corner.
	6. For now, just “square off” the corners and wall turns (we’ll get into curving these later).
	7. Finally, fill in the background with black to cover the dot/circle/diamond layout markers.

## Curved Interlace Example

Most examples from actual documents use curved lines, not the angular corners we’ve done so far. Doing curves requires thinking ahead in the corners and walls. To get a smooth curve into the corner and against walls, you need to start back from the edge of the line that will hit the wall. Then smoothly curve the lines into the corners and walls. Try to keep the band a constant width, even though you may overrun the circles (or diamonds) in the centers of the cells. You’ll see many examples of curved knotwork designs in the remainder of these instructions.

	1. Start with the initial example, at step 5.
	2. Smoothly curve the lines into the corners and walls, overlapping cell boundaries as needed. The new curves are shown in red.
	3. Clean up any stray marks “inside” the lace, and fill in the background with black as before.



# Simple borders (“plaits”)

A row of cells can be used to form a border. The simplest version is one cell wide. The example below shows the grid, a section of the plait, and the same section filled in:



As the colors show, it uses two bands to form the border, which repeats every two cells.

A border “1 and 1/2” cells wide uses three bands, as shown by the colored example below:



This type of border is uses as a basis for a number of Celtic knots, as will be seen in some of the examples. It repeats every three cells.

A 2-cell wide border (often used in Celtic work) is initially four separate bands, repeating every four cells:





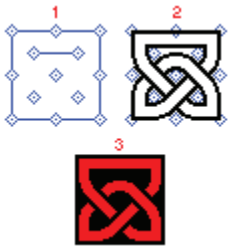
*Please note that all these plaits are constructed in the same way as the simple interlacing example, except they have no “corners”, just “walls”.*

## Interruptions and Interlacing Breaks

Celtic artists usually devised patterns in single bands where possible. How was this done?

We see that Celtic knotwork panels (and even whole pages or the sides of carved stones) are often designed to be formed from a single band. For simple interlaces, this only works when the ratio of the number of cell sides has no common factors (for example, in 2 cell X 3 cell templates, 3X4, 5X3, etc. ).

	An interlaced 2 cell by 3 cell panel generates a single band.
	A 2 cell by 2 cell panel, when simply interlaced, results in 2 bands.

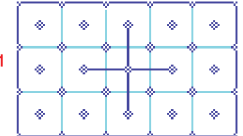


	<p>The same 2 cell by 2 cell panel, with one added wall, results in 1 band. The first part shows the 2x2 cell grid with the additional “wall” added. The second part shows the band generated by this template with the same rules and methods used in basic interlacing--over and under, changing direction (“turning”, or “bouncing off”) at walls and in corners. The third shows the band filled in with color.</p>
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The trick is: knowing how to add the “walls” into the panel patterns to end up with a single band in the end.

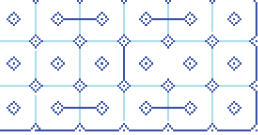
# Interrupted Panel Construction


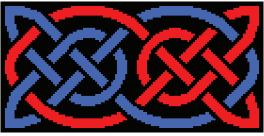
Most Celtic knotwork designs can be seen either as connected panels (with a side partially removed) or interrupted borders (with extra walls and corners); the two concepts are very similar. The class descriptions use the “panel grid with added walls” interpretation. The original Celtic designers used these breaks and interruptions to develop their striking patterns. They often broke down long rows of border cells into areas like the 2X3 panel above, making designs that cover whole pages (or the sides of standing stones) using one long connected band.

The following example knot is taken from [BainI], pg. 43, using a pattern found in *Lindisfarne*, especially on Folio 27:

	<p>1. It is formed on a 3X5 cell grid with additional cross- shaped walls forming four new corners.</p>
	<p>2. The bands are generated in the same way as for simple interlaced panels, “turning” at corners and walls.</p>
	<p>3. The bands can then be colored in, as with the other panels. For other ways of treating bands, see the section on <a href="#">Line Treatments</a></p>

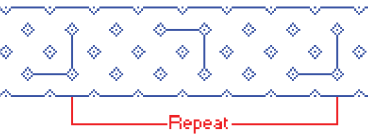


The second example knot panel is also a pattern taken from *Lindisfarne*, folios 27, 95, and 211:

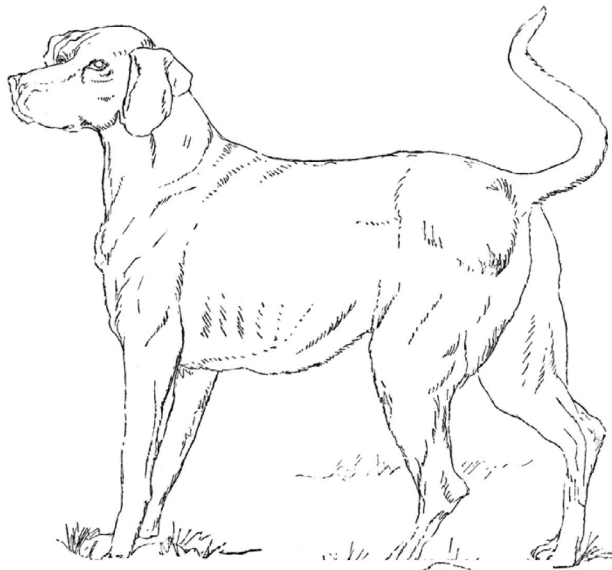
	<p>1. It is formed on a 3X6 cell grid with five additional walls.</p>
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	<p>2. The bands are generated in the same way as for simple interlaced panels, “turning” at corners and walls, whether the original panel walls or the added walls. A new feature used here is the longer curve used above the short added wall. Note that the radius of this curve is made to fit “over” the shorter curve--it is not simply two short curves with a straight section between.</p>
	<p>3. The bands can then be colored in, as with the other panels.</p>

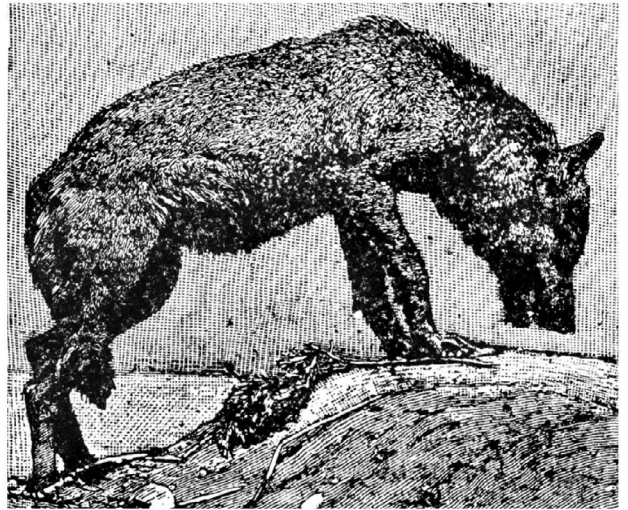
This pattern was originally used as a border and was designed to be “mitred” to fit around corners.

The third example knot is a border :

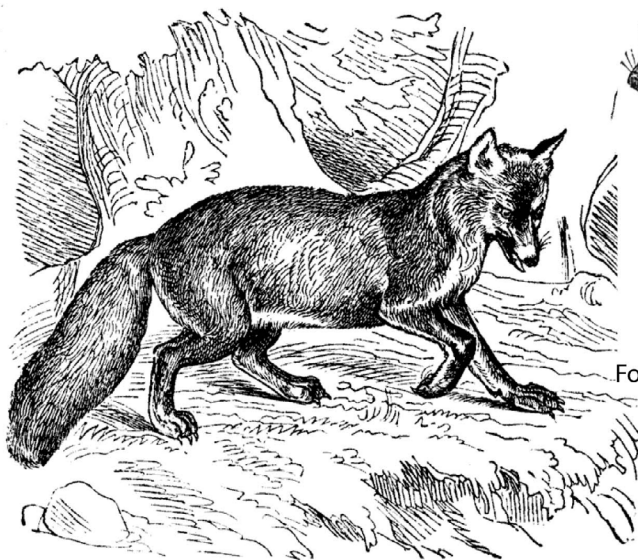
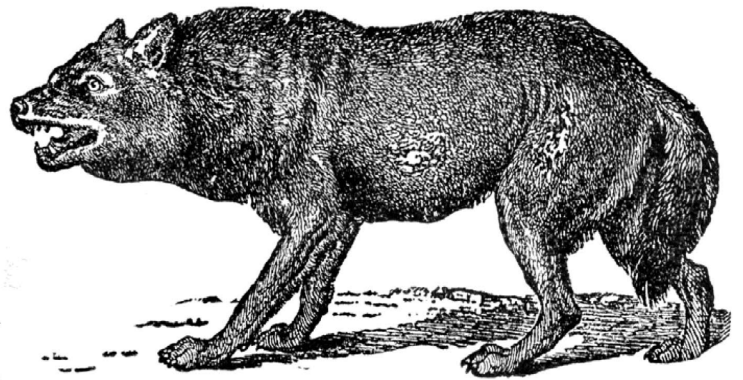
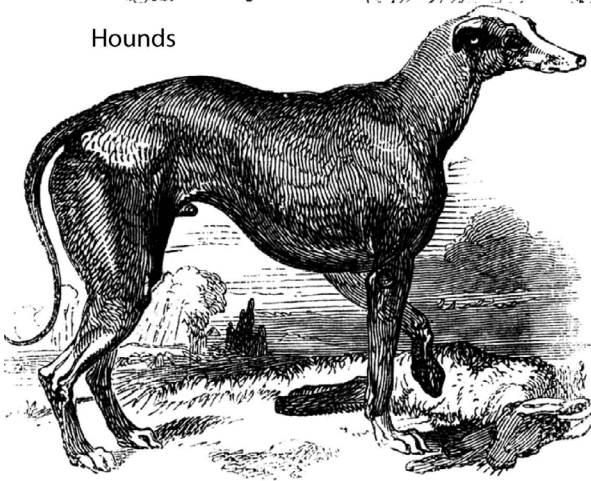
	<p>1. The basic pattern is 2 cells wide, repeating every 6 cells, using four additional walls to make two extra unconnected corners.</p>
	<p>2. The bands are generated in the same way as for simple interlaced panels, “turning” at corners and walls, whether the original panel walls or the added walls. This pattern also uses longer curve used above the short added wall.</p>
	<p>3. The bands can then be colored in, as with the other panels.</p>



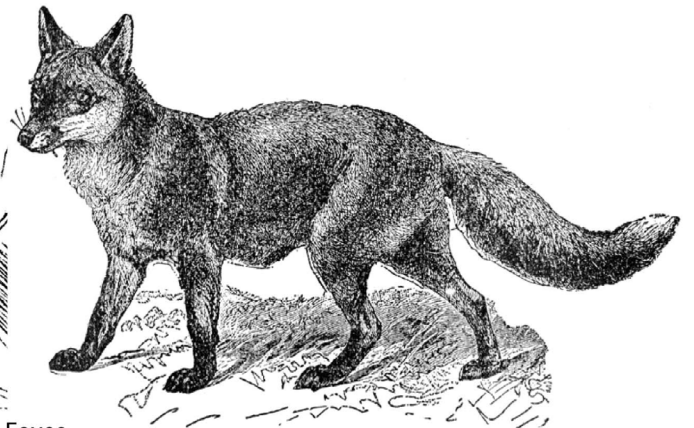
Hounds



Wolves

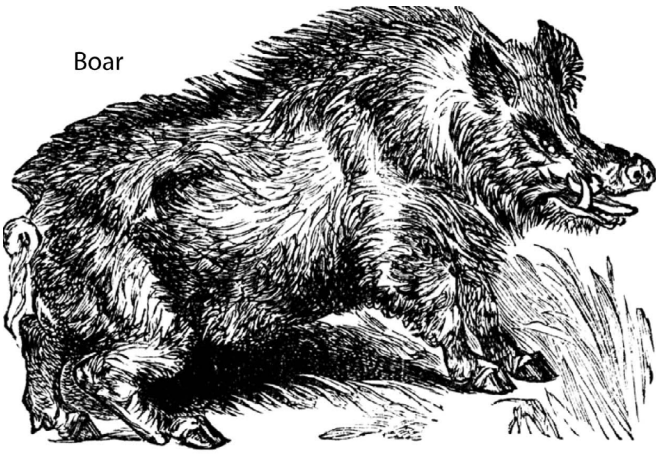


Foxes

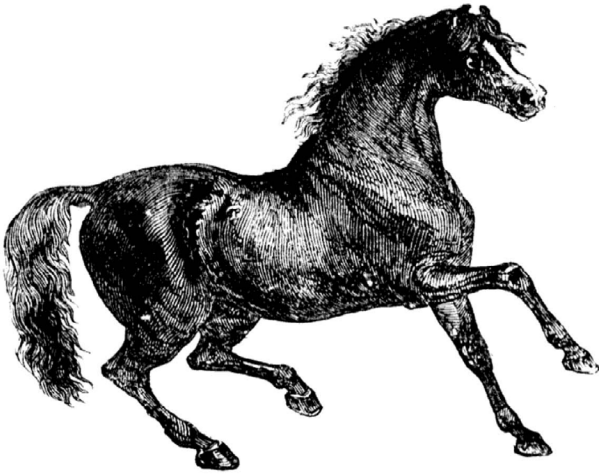
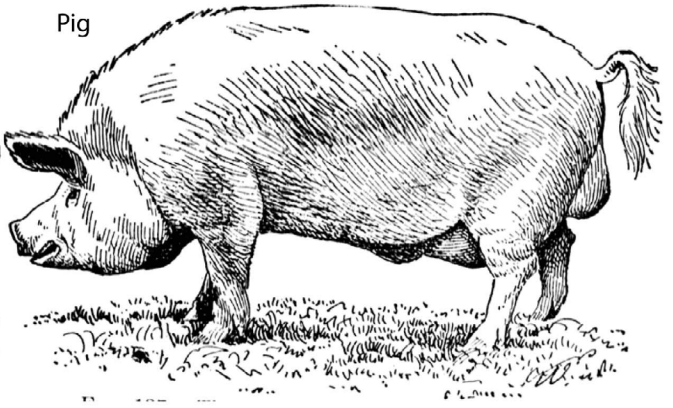




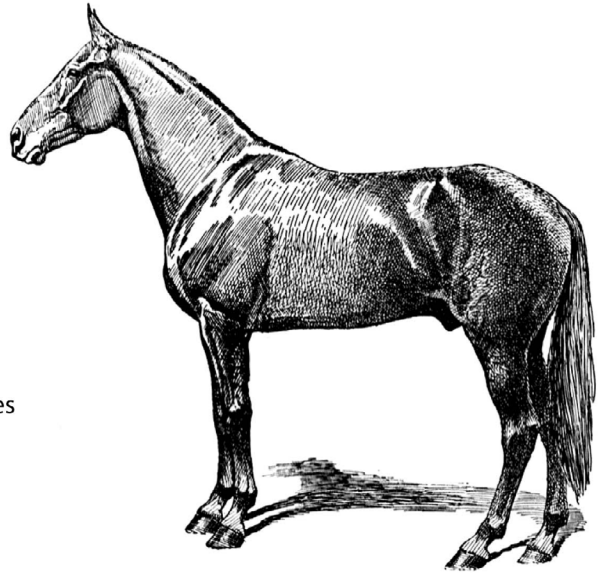
Boar



Pig



Horses

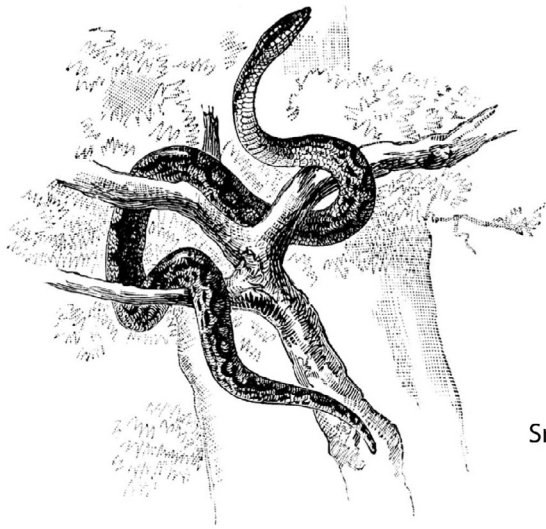


Deer/Stag

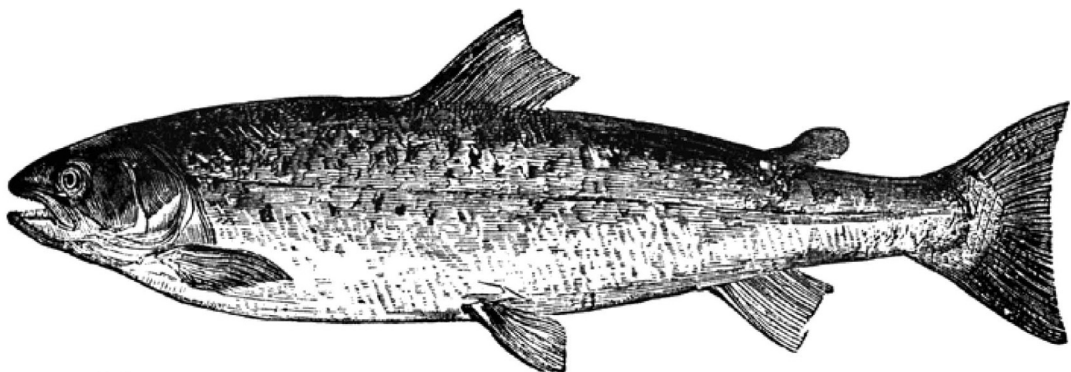
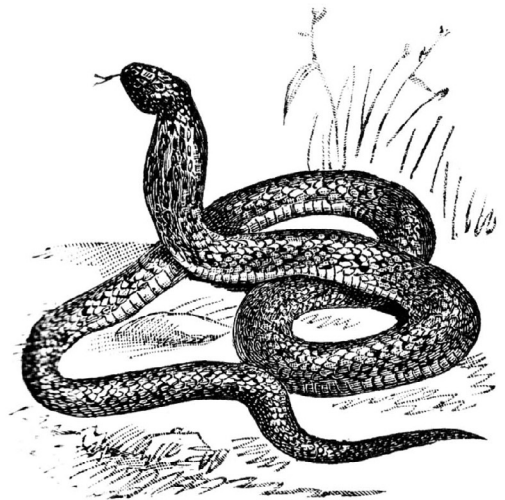




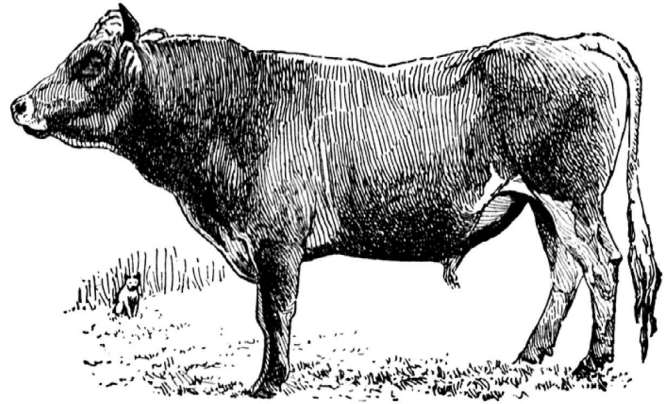
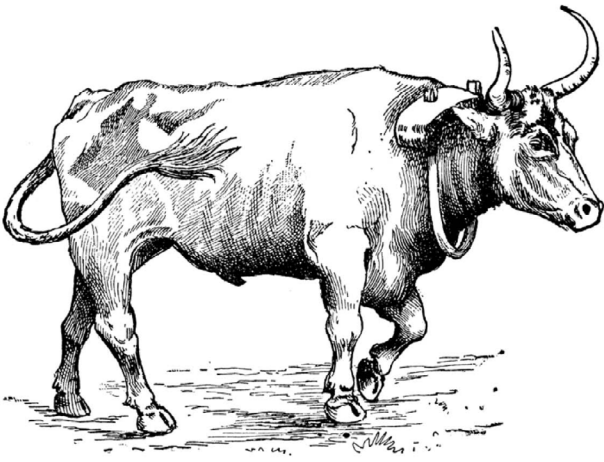
Dragons



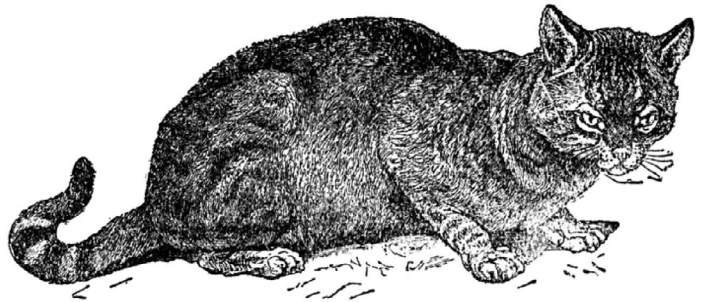
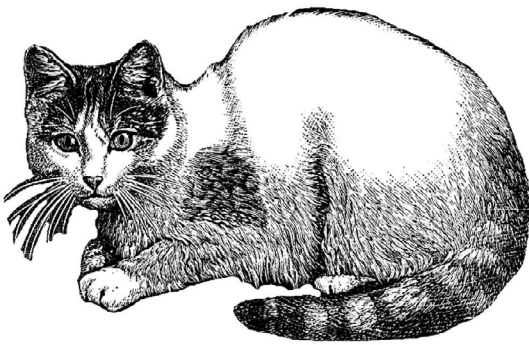
Snakes



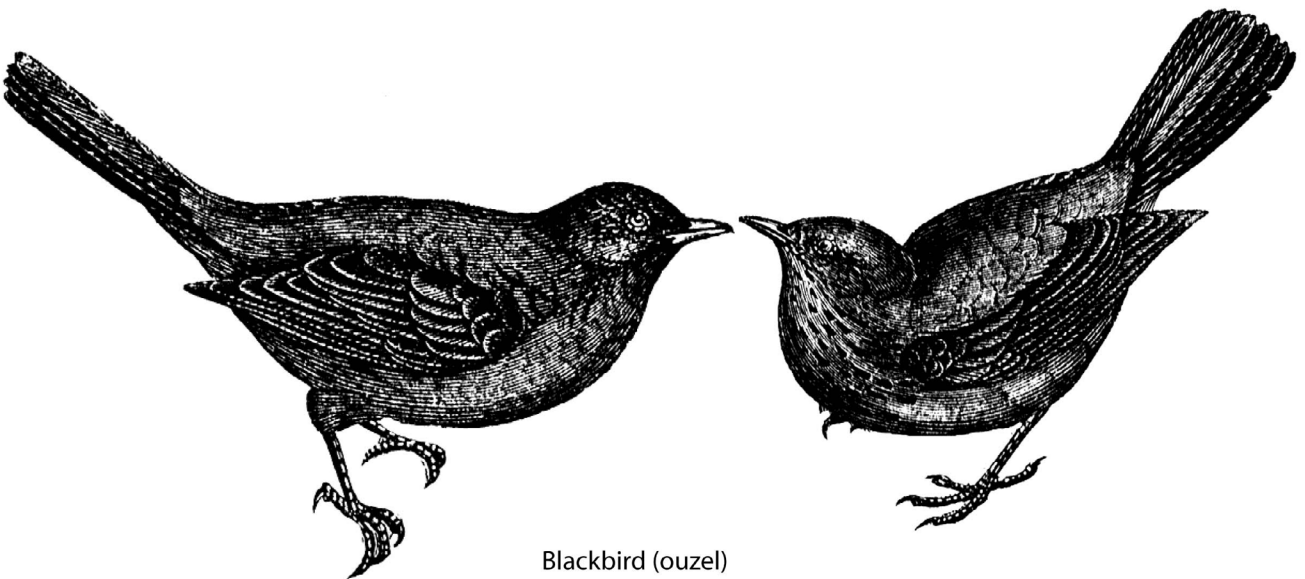
Salmon



Bulls

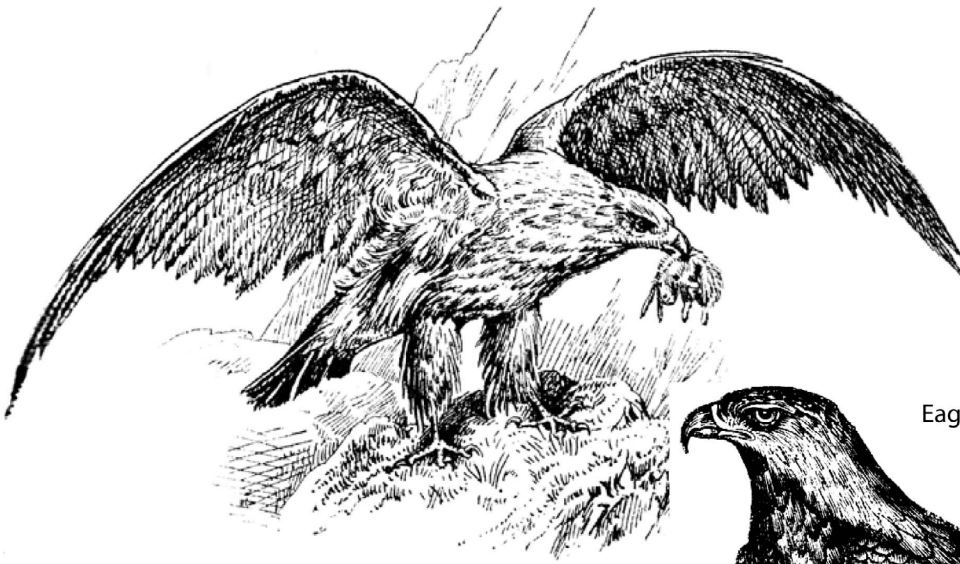


Cats

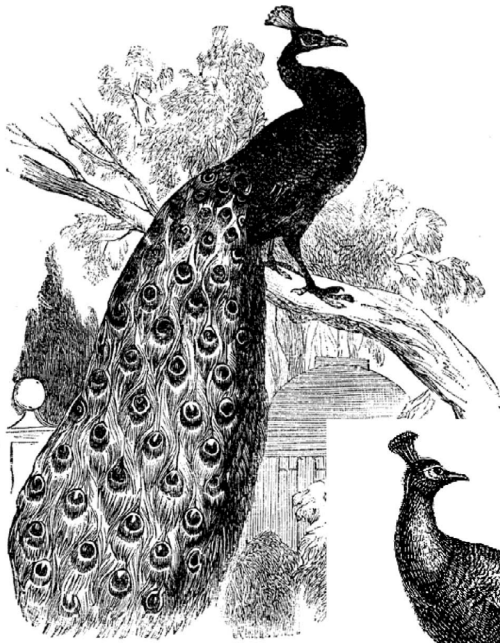
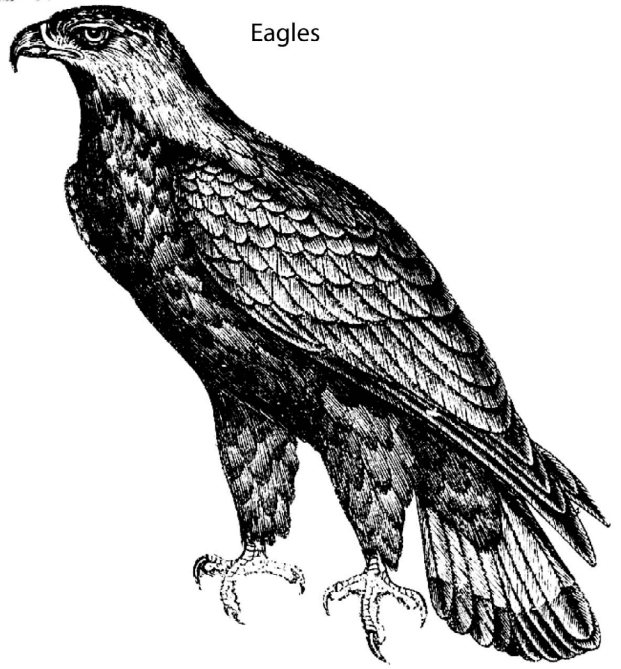


Blackbird (ouzel)

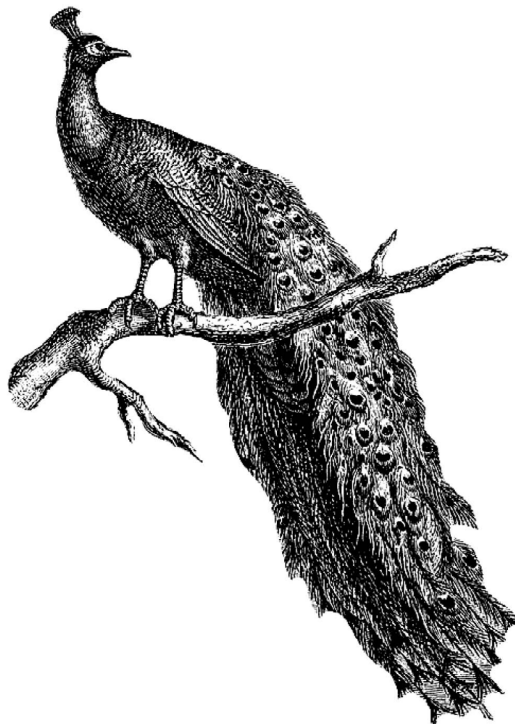




Eagles



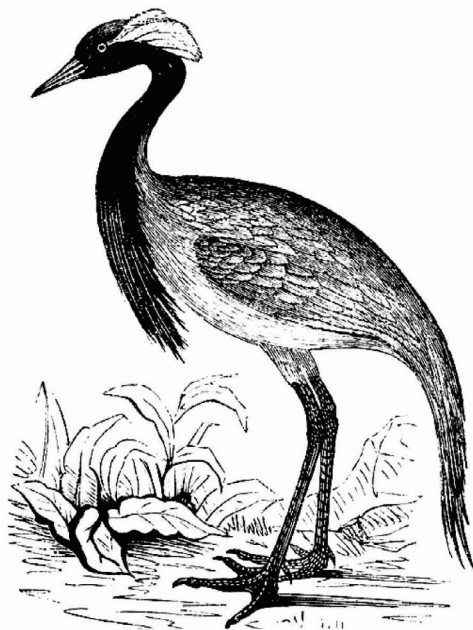
Peacocks







Cranes

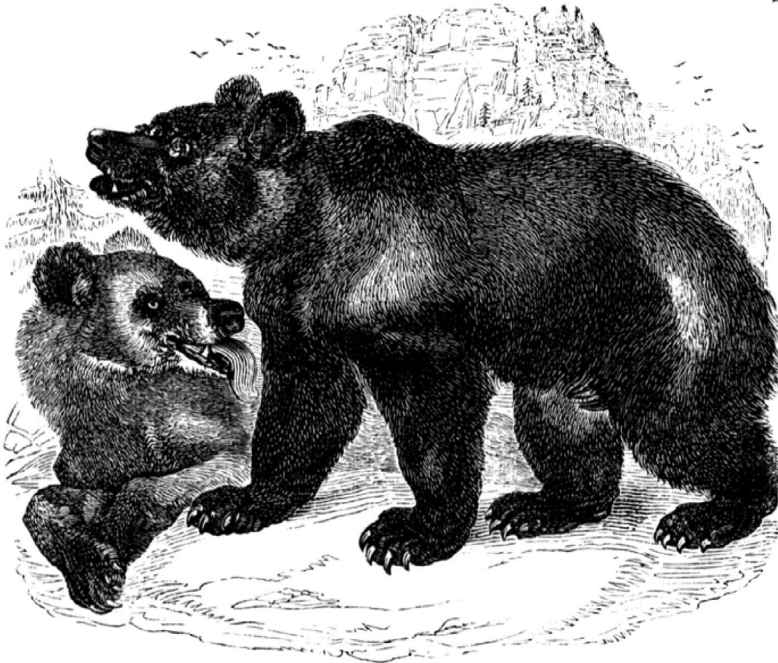
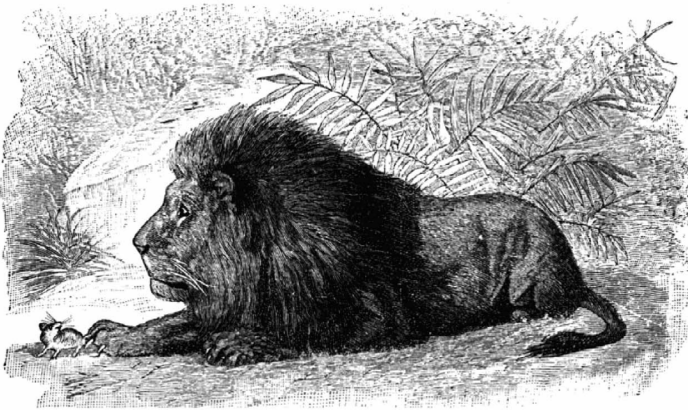
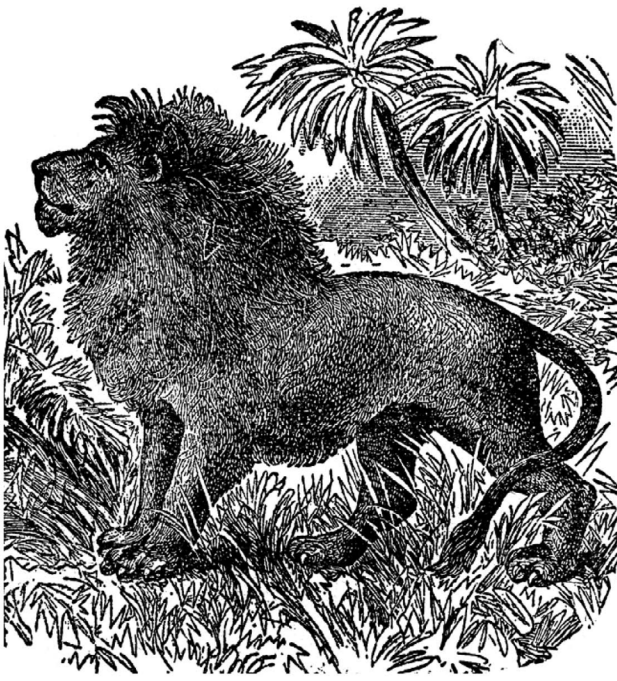


Hérons



Crows



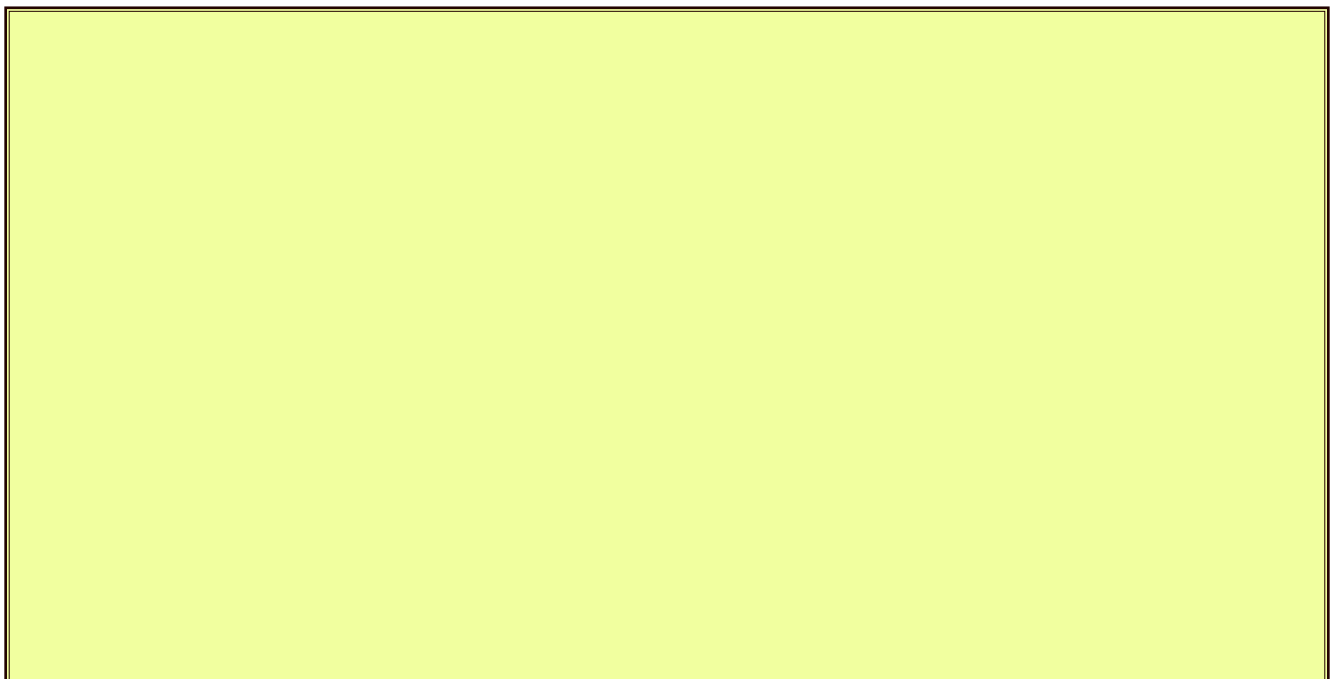


## **Insular Art Questions:**

1. Where does Insular art come from?
2. Most of the surviving examples of Insular art consist of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What does Insular Art look like?
4. There is no attempt to represent \_\_\_\_\_ in Insular art.
5. Insular art is the combination of what 2 styles in what context?
6. What is the true legacy of insular art?
7. What are some examples of the surviving Insular manuscripts? List 4
8. What do Celtic knots symbolize?
9. Why did medieval artists use animals in their art?
10. What group incorporated and altered symbols from previous cultures?
11. What is a Bestiary and what is it used for?
12. What is important to remember about the use of animals in Insular art?
13. What two animals would you identify with and why?

## **Monotype Questions:**

14. What is a monotype?
15. What surfaces can be used to create this type of print?
16. How does monotyping work?
17. Who invented monotyping? What is special about him?
18. Name 5 other artists that also created monotypes.
19. How are monotypes different from monotypes?
20. How are they similar?





# Monotypes

Monotyping is a type of printmaking made by drawing or painting on a smooth, non-absorbent surface. The surface, or matrix, was historically a copper etching plate, but in contemporary work it can vary from zinc or glass to acrylic glass. The image is then transferred onto a sheet of paper by pressing the two together, usually using a printing-press. Monotypes can also be created by inking an entire surface and then, using brushes or rags, removing ink to create a subtractive image, e.g. creating lights from a field of opaque color. The inks used may be oil based or water based. With oil based inks, the paper may be dry, in which case the image has more contrast, or the paper may be damp, in which case the image has a 10 percent greater range of tones.

Monotyping produces a unique print, or monotype; most of the ink is removed during the initial pressing. Although subsequent reprintings are sometimes possible, they differ greatly from the first print and are generally considered inferior. A second print from the original plate is called a “ghost print” or “cognate”. Stencils, watercolor, solvents, brushes, and other tools are often used to embellish a monotype print. Monotypes are often spontaneously executed and with no previous sketch.

The monotype process was invented by Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (1609-64), an Italian painter and etcher who was also the first artist to produce brushed sketches intended as finished and final works of art (rather than as studies for another work). He is the only Italian to have invented a printmaking technique. He began to make monotypes in the 1640s, normally working from black to white, and produced over twenty surviving ones, over half of which are set at night (Theseus finding the Arms of his Father, 1643).

William Blake developed a different technique, painting on millboard in egg tempera to produce both new works and coloured impressions of his prints and book illustrations. Few other artists used the technique until Degas, who made several, often working on them further after printing (Beside the Sea, 1876-7); Pissarro also made several. Paul Gauguin used a variant technique involving tracing, later taken up by Paul Klee. In the twentieth century the technique became more popular.

Monoprints and monotypes are very similar. Both involve the transfer of ink from a plate to the paper, canvas, or other surface that will ultimately hold the work of art. In the case of monotypes, the plate is a featureless plate. It contains no features that will impart any definition to successive prints. The most common feature would be the etched or engraved line on a metal plate. In the absence of any permanent features on the surface of the plate, all articulation of imagery is dependent on one unique inking, resulting in one unique print.

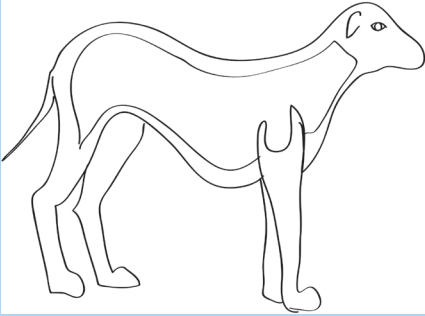
Monoprints, on the other hand, are the results of plates that have permanent features on them. Monoprints can be thought of as variations on a theme, with the theme resulting from some permanent features being found on the plate—lines, textures—that persist from print to print. Variations are confined to those resulting from how the plate is inked prior to each print. The variations are endless, but certain permanent features on the plate will tend to persist from one print to the next.



# Art Production

## Insular Animal Monotype

For this assignment, you will be creating a monotype of an animal that represents you in the Insular style, with celtic knots. Before you begin, practice the knots that are in the chapter. This is part of the assignment.

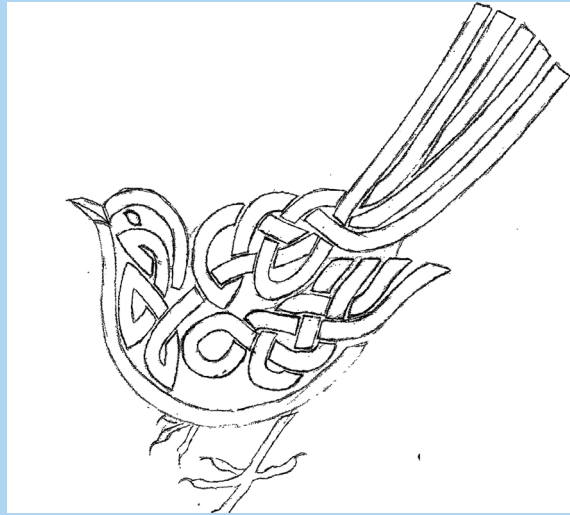


1. Select one of the animals from the chapter. This animal should have qualities that represent you.

Draw the outline of the animal. **DO NOT TRACE.** Draw an interior of the animal like what you see to the left. Now, add knots to the exterior of the animal or to the interior. The animal and the knotting need to take up the whole page.

2. When you are done, I will give you a sheet of plexiglass. Tape the drawing to the plexiglass.

3. Pull out a set of watercolors. Following the design of your drawing, paint onto the plexiglass. Less water and more paint is the key. You probably will have to paint the image a couple of times, to get the richness of color that you need. Remember, more colors is NOT better. Stick to three colors tops. It should not look like a rainbow.



4. Allow the image to dry. Remove your drawing.

5. Take some of the designated paper and mist it fully with water. Allow a minute or so to pass while the paper absorbs the water. If it is still shiny, it is not ready.

6. Put the plexiglass onto the press, paint side up. Put the paper on top of the plexiglass, wet side down. Run them through the press with the side setting at about 20-25.

7. Pull the print, sign it, number it and turn it in. Wash off the plexiglass and return it to me.

8. Take the gold acrylic paint and carefully outline everything. The gold line should be thin and even throughout.